Claims

1. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection obtained by sensitizing a solid phase with a conjugated antigen prepared by chemical bonding of HCV antigen and a carrier protein.

2. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 1, which is obtained by sensitizing the solid phase directly with HCV antigen, along with the sensitization of the solid phase with the conjugated antigen.

3. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 1, wherein the HCV antigen is selected from core antigen, NS3 antigen, NS4 antigen and NS5 antigen.

4. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 1, which is obtained by sensitizing the solid phase with three or more HCV antigens selected from

a. a conjugated antigen prepared by chemical bonding of core antigen and a carrier protein,

b. NS3 antigen, or a conjugated antigen prepared by chemical bonding of NS3 antigen and a carrier protein,

c. a conjugated antigen prepared by chemical bonding of NS4 antigen and a carrier protein, and

d. a conjugated antigen prepared by chemical bonding of NS5 antigen and a carrier protein.

5. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 1, wherein the HCV antigen is one or more antigens containing one or more different epitopes having HCV antigenic activity.

6. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 1, wherein the carrier protein is selected from BSA, ovalbumin and hemocyanin.

7. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 1, wherein the solid phase is carrier particles.

8. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 7, wherein the carrier particles are hydrophobic particles.

9. A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 8, wherein the hydrophobic particles are polystyrene latex.

10. A method of diagnosing hepatitis C virus infection, which comprises adding the diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus infection defined in Claim 7 to a sample, and measuring the degree of agglutination of the carrier particles.

11. A method of diagnosing hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 10, wherein the degree of agglutination is measured by a flow cytometer.

12. A method of diagnosing hepatitis C virus infection as claimed in claim 11, wherein the measurement by a flow cytometer is made by measuring forward-scattered light.